

To: Maier, Brent[Maier.Brent@epa.gov]; Ebbert, Laura[Ebbert.Laura@epa.gov]; Higuchi, Dean[Higuchi.Dean@epa.gov]; Mogharabi, Nahal[MOGHARABI.NAHAL@EPA.GOV]; Calvino, Maria Soledad[Calvino.Maria@epa.gov]
From: Zito, Kelly
Sent: Thur 8/20/2015 8:57:47 PM
Subject: Statement - For Tank Queries from Media/Congressional/Elected/Tribal officials

Hi all – Please use this to answer questions you’ve received on the issue of Navajo agricultural water tanks.

Thanks-

Kelly

Navajo Water Tank – STATEMENT

The U.S. EPA will work closely with Navajo Nation authorities to investigate a recent complaint about water contamination in one tank provided by U.S. EPA for agricultural purposes in the Shiprock, New Mexico area. Aside from this complaint, EPA has received no other complaints about tank water contamination.

Following the Gold King Mine release, an EPA contractor has been providing storage and delivery of agricultural water in Shiprock and other parts of the Navajo Nation. EPA did not administer distribution of water from the tanks.

Specifically, thirteen tanks were deployed to provide

watering service within the Navajo Nation following the Gold King Mine release, which impacted the San Juan River. Nine of these tanks were deployed in the Shiprock area. These tanks were sourced from the water division of Triple S Trucking Company, an Aztec, N.M.-based tanker truck company. According to the contractor, the tanks were steam cleaned and inspected prior to use at Shiprock. Water distributed by Triple S tanks, under contract to EPA, was provided by the Bloomfield Utility Department, the municipal water utility company for the City of Bloomfield, N.M.

Based on EPA surface water data collected following the August 5, 2015 Gold King Mine release, San Juan River water quality in the Navajo Nation has returned to pre-event conditions. This determination is based on a review of water quality data collected from August 7-15, 2015 at EPA's sampling point near Hogback, N.M. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye had a productive phone conversation on August 19 to review water quality data. Based on that conversation the President indicated that the Navajo Nation may re-open the San Juan River for irrigation purposes as soon as this weekend. It was also agreed on that call, that Friday August 21, would be the last day for EPA water deliveries for agricultural use on the Navajo Nation.

EPA will continue to work with the Navajo Nation in the coming weeks to ensure that a long-term monitoring plan for the San Juan River is implemented. In addition, EPA is positioned to provide technical assistance in flushing irrigation ditches on the Navajo Nation.

Kelly Zito

Director of Public Affairs

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9

San Francisco, CA

Office: 415.947.4306

Mobile: 415.760.9171

Web: EPA in the Pacific Southwest

Twitter <https://twitter.com/EPAregion9>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/EPAregion9>